

NO FLOWERS FOR ALLY

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Radius

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CAST

Nancy, an old blind woman

Ally, a young man

Max, his friend

NO FLOWERS FOR ALLY

(The play opens in a dark church to the sound of an old woman, Nancy, humming a hymn tune as she arranges some flowers in a vase. Max enters, laughing and pushing Ally in a wheelchair, rather recklessly. He stops and goes off to explore, leaving Ally stranded. They do not see Nancy at first)

ALLY: Max...

MAX: Ally?

ALLY: Can't see a flaming thing.

MAX: Ally?

ALLY: Over here, you idiot.

MAX: Coming.

ALLY: Can't stand churches.

MAX: Won't be here long.

ALLY: Can't think why you wanted to come in here anyway.

MAX: I don't see why it bothers you if you can't see anything.

ALLY: It just spooks me. Anyway, it smells.

MAX: Just an old building.
Old hymn books...
Rotting flowers...

ALLY: Fresh.

MAX: Fresh?

ALLY: Can't you smell it? Fresh flowers.

NANCY: Sell them anywhere these days.
Supermarkets. Post Office. Garages.
All over.
Come from abroad. All the same. Ready wrapped.
Cellophane.
Any time of the year, same flowers. Boring really.
But makes a bit of colour.
This time of year.

(Silence)

ALLY: *(Whispering.)* Max?
Did you hear anything?

MAX: I think so.

ALLY: Who was it?

MAX: Well... It is a Church...

ALLY: *(Frightened.)* What's that supposed to mean?

MAX: Well... It could be anything...or nothing...

ALLY: Max, get me out of here.

MAX: It wasn't hostile...

ALLY: What do you mean, it wasn't hostile? Isn't it enough to
hear a voice in an empty, pitch-black Church?
You want hostility as well?
God, give me strength.

MAX: He might.

ALLY: What?

MAX: Give you strength. You need it, you old spaz.

ALLY: *(Bitter laugh.)* Stop messing. And enough of the old spaz. I'm out of here.

MAX: Not without me you're not.
(Pause.) Well... not yet...

ALLY: You can't do this to me.

MAX: Just watch me. Well, you can't watch me. But you'll just have to be patient.

ALLY: But why did you want to come in here anyway?

MAX: Bit of a laugh.

ALLY: Bit of a laugh? You've got a warped sense of humour.
(Pause.) That voice, reckon it were the vicar?

MAX: Nah. Sounded like an old woman.

ALLY: I thought they were.

MAX: What? Old women?

ALLY: Reckon it's a ghost?

MAX: An angel?

[Nancy laughs.]

ALLY: Hear that? For Pete's sake, Max, get me out!

MAX: Aren't you interested?

ALLY: No, I'm flaming not.

MAX: It's a Church, you can't come to any harm in a Church. You're close to...things in a Church.

ALLY: Exactly! Too flipping close. I'm begging you, Max, get me out! I mean it.
What do I have to do to get you take me seriously?

MAX: Get down on your knees?

ALLY: Very funny. That's sick, is that.
It's all very well for you, you're used to it, Church and that. Me, I'm a heathen.

[Nancy begins to sing a hymn.]

There it is again!

MAX: I think you're safe, it's a hymn. God wouldn't sing hymns. It would look like bragging. He doesn't do that.

ALLY: *(Yelling at the disembodied voice.)*
You - who the hell are you?
And what the hell do you think you're doing in the dark?
Why the f*** haven't you put some frigging lights on?

(Nancy stops singing.)

NANCY: Ah, yes. My fault I'm afraid. We were told to, at school...
Put the lights on, I mean.
When we come into a room.
Normal, you see, it was all geared to make us normal.
But I thought I was alone so I didn't bother.
If I'd known you were coming...
Usually have the place to myself...
Polish the brasses and do the flowers...
No one comes in...
The place to myself...
Besides the light switches are a bit high up for me...
Can't be sure I can reach them.

ALLY: Polish brasses? Do the flowers?
What in God's name do you mean?
How can you do all that in the flaming dark?

Are you a ghost or a flipping magician or what?
Max, get me out of here...
There's an old witch here who can see in the dark.

MAX: Churches are full of them.

NANCY: Dear me, no. I'm not a magician, I may be a witch; I think I should rather like that.

ALLY: If you can see in the dark what colour are they? The flowers?

NANCY: Pink, I think. They usually are, and that bronzy colour. Chrysanthus. And there are some yellow carnations. And they always put in some wispy stuff. Never enough to do anything with so I always bring some of my own greenery. From the garden. I still haven't fetched enough. I'll have to go out and see what there is in the church yard.

(Sound of Nancy leaving the church. Silence for a while when the boys are left on their own.)

ALLY: Flowers... Max... Tell me about the flowers... After the accident... For Des...